1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

place. The "arsenal" at Bendiyagalge is well seen in Plate XIX, figures 1 and 2, while at Pihilegodagalge all the bows and arrows were rested on an old ant heap in the centre of the cave.

Though men do sometimes dig for yams, hunting is essentially their work, and yams were usually dug by the women who also do the cooking. This is of the simplest kind; yams are roasted in ashes, in which way meat may also be cooked, while practically everything else is boiled in a pot over three stones. Many Veddas also know how to cook curry, and deer's flesh is dried on a rack and smoked. A rack is built usually in a sunny place, the meat is put on this and a smoky fire kept burning beneath it, the flesh is thus dried in the sun and smoked simultaneously. This process is usually superintended by men.

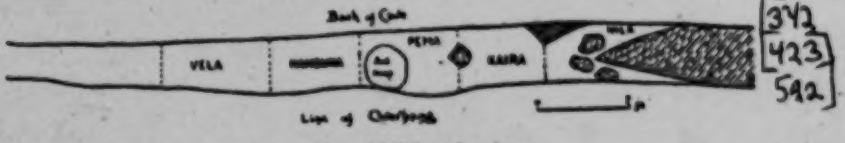

Fig. 9. Plan of Pihilegodagalge.

Plate XVII, figure 1, shows a rack built to smoke meat on the top of the Bendiyagalge rock-mass.

A Vedda will never sleep on the ground if there is any rock upon which he can lie. If he has a deerskin or a piece of cloth he will lie on it, if not he does not seem to object to the cold rock, and so avoids contact with the ground damp from the heavy dews. He always keeps a small fire burning beside him; this was noticed by Nevill, who says: "A Vaedda never sleeps without a smouldering fire by his side. I am assured, should accident oblige them to do so, they have usually died from a fever caught by the omission[1]."

The Veddas are strictly monogamous, and we were able to confirm Bailey's observations as regards their marital fidelity. "Their constancy to their wives is a very remarkable trait in their character in a country where conjugal fidelity is certainly not classed as the highest of domestic virtues. Infidelity,

[1] *Taprobanian*, Vol. 1, Aug. 1886, p. 187.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-8 (1907-1908) 1911
AX8 Vedda AX8

resin obtained from the *timbiri* tree (*Dioglyne embryopteris*). The shaft of the arrow is commonly made of the wood of the *walan* tree (*Pterospermum suberifolium*). The arrow is still the almost universal cutting tool, as we had good opportunity of ascertaining at Henebedda. There was no knife in the community, and we noticed the skill with which a deer was skinned and cut up with an arrow. The Veddas certainly desired no better tool, and when we pressed a butcher's knife on one of them in order to see how he would handle the unaccustomed tool, it was interesting to note how slowly he worked and how poor the result was compared with that he obtained with an arrow, which he held just above the blade somewhat as a European holds a penholder. No less astonishing was the skill employed in removing the skull cap with a few strokes of the axe, not only was the brain lifted out and cooked entire, but it was removed so neatly and cleanly that the result was more suggestive of an anatomical preparation than a piece of butcher's work.

The Veddas we met were all bad or indifferent shots, and we have no doubt that game is seldom shot at a distance much beyond fifteen or twenty yards, the marvellous stalking of the Veddas enabling them to approach within this distance. The bow, to which the string is securely fastened at one end, is carefully unstrung when not in use. To string it, this end is placed upon the ground, the upper end of the shaft and the string being held in the hands, the sole of one foot is then placed against the middle of the shaft which is steadied, we might almost say gripped, between the great toe and the second toe. Much of the weight of the body is thrown against the middle of the shaft while the hands pull down the upper end to which the string is quickly secured, as is shown in Plate LXIII. Plate LXIV shows the position of the hands and arms immediately before the arrow is released. The bowman is Handuna of Henebedda, who is left-handed and who in spite of being the father of a large family remains the only left-handed individual in the community. The length of a bow collected at Henebedda was 172 cm., while four arrows also obtained at Henebedda varied from 88 to 105 cm. in length.

2:Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5

They are very rude in their cookery, often burning the flesh in the fire, which they produce by rubbing together two pieces of the wood of the vellan tree (*Pterospermum suberifolium*, Sam.). A hole is scooped in one piece with an arrow-blade, and the other, which is pointed, is inserted into it, and twirled rapidly round between the hands till it ignites.

They are fond of betel, when they can get it; but in lieu of the compound which goes by this name, they have the following substitutes. Instead of the betel leaf, they eat the astringent bark of the demette tree (*Gmelina Asiatica*, *L.*), or the leaves of an aromatic plant called the madurutala (*Ocimum sanctum*—or *O. canum*, *L.*) For areka nut, they chew the bark of the moratree (*Nephelium longanum*, Camb.), the oupaloo or wellan connitta tree; and calcined snail shells, or the bark of the areloo tree (*Terminalia chebula*, Retz.), supplies the place of lime or chunam, which forms so important an ingredient in a prepared quid of betel. They do not smoke, and are very temperate, drinking water only.

I need not say that they are very simple and primitive in their habits. The "wilder sort" have had too little communication with the Singhalese to have acquired the vices of civilization. The few necessaries of life which the forest does not supply, such as steel and iron for their arrow-heads and axes, and the very scanty clothing which they wear, they obtain by barter, their wax and honey, elk flesh, and ivory, being eagerly sought after by the neighbouring Singhalese, or "the ubiquitous Moors."

They are very harmless, too; though, according to Knox, were much dreaded once. Even yet there are traditions that they kidnapped children, ran off with young girls, way-laid travellers, and attacked the tavalams or bullock-caravans. But now, at any rate, they are as peaceful as it is possible to be. They are proverbially truthful and honest. They are fond of their children, who early become useful to them; the boys soon are familiar with the use of the bow, while the girls, armed with a pointed stick, add to the family larder at a very tender age, by killing the iguana, and digging for wild yams.

Their constancy to their wives is a very remarkable trait in their character in a country where conjugal fidelity is certainly not classed as the highest of domestic virtues. Infidelity, whether in the husband or the wife, appears to be unknown, and I was

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kadura (*strychnos, nux vomica*), the diwi kadura (*taberna montana dichotoma*, Roxb.), the kolong (*nauclea cordifolia*, Roxb.), the milla (*vitex altissima*, Linn.), the mora (*nephelium longanum*, Camb.), the kaluwera (ebony, *dios. ebenum*, Retz.), which they say would stupify them; but though the three first mentioned trees would be injurious, it is probably that the rest would be harmless.

5: Spinal D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

Vela was an interesting little chap and, unlike the others, had always something to say for himself. He entertained us with charms, pleasing lullabies, and songs of rock and stream demons that came as fast as as leaves shaken by the wind, in the guise of bears, their mouths adrip with human blood. These he sang despite warnings from the others who reminded him that he had sucked a chicken bone, which was a dangerous thing to do before invoking devils lest it invite their anger.

Coming to a pool, brown with decaying leaves, we asked if the water was good. "Very good," said a Vedda, adding the epicurean touch, "Those fallen flowers floating there make the water sweet; they are the flowers that give good honey."

It was high noon when Veddas left us to go in search of food. But Vela lingered to tell us of the oppression of the local headman. Did they but catch a young deer or pea-chick that came their way they were prosecuted. The visiting apothecary too was bad; he gave them no medicines except for gifts of honey or meat; and the poor fellows had little enough for themselves.

Having visited a cave containing the battered remains of an old Buddha, we continued our circuit of the rock; and after a walk of an hour and a half under a burning sky, came to the Veddas of the *Kwdda Ulpotha*. These had no huts of any sort, but merely sat grouped in families under various trees. It was the season of the *kong* fruit, of which there was plenty about. Women were boiling down the luscious pulp with which to make cakes, or extracting from the seeds an oil said to be good for sores and wounds. Very fond of the fruit they all were; it had been their only sustenance for days. One little urchin, his mouth be-ringed with parangi ulcers, was licking clean a coconut shell containing the acrid juice, with a relish worthy of a tastier dish.

The patriarch of the settlement, Naida, and his wife were typical Veddas; but here again most of the others showed Tamil admixture. One man had a large scar across his face. The manner he came by it illustrates well the aggressiveness of the little Ceylon sloth-bear. When out collecting honey he saw a she-bear and her cub. Realizing the certain disaster of such an encounter he cautiously climbed a tree; but in doing so snapped a twig and gave himself away. With a series of blood-curdling cries she charged him, and clambering up the tree, bit and clawed him severely. A large flap was torn from his face. This his father sewed up with a thorn and fibre, and doctored with a result that might have done credit to any surgeon. Living as they invariably do in the neighbourhood of rocks, and having kindred tastes in honey, yams, and fruit, the Veddas and bears often encounter each other, as the ugly scars on many of the men testify.

As, footsore and tired, we rounded the southern end of the rock towards evening, we met parties of Veddas returning with basketfuls of *kong* fruit. One youth was up a tree making the jungle ring to his song as he beat down the berries. As it darkened we reached Manampitiya, but not before we had worried a blind old owl that had descended to a streamlet to quench its thirst.

It is hard to forget that first experience of the Veddas in their homes: those voices in the jungle, that sight of their huts among the trees, and of their women roasting dainty little flowers for food.

5: Spinal D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 ·AX5 Vedda AX5

136 The grass in the glades was so tall that it covered us entirely. One's only chance of encountering game lay at the forest margins, or in the infrequent patches of burnt ground, overspread with the tender spicous shoots of which the chital are fond. Parrots and doves broke the stillness of the evening with their crooning. Startled quails whirred from our feet crying vociferous caution to their crouching young, and sometimes we would flush a *pathan kukula*, a species of partridge. But the note that accorded most with the brooding genius of the place, was the mournful, incessant 'ho-ho, ho-ho' of the *kotsa-kapua*, a cuckoo which, try as we might, we failed to see.

361 The next morning, provided with a small langur we shot on the way,
231 we visited the Henebedde Veddas in their homes. Handuna's hut stood at the foot of a densely wooded hill. There were a few cattle about which the Veddas tended for a consideration from the Sinhalese; and, what was even more unexpected, we found here a couple of hens with excellent broods; for, even the Sinhalese of these parts, as we learnt to our cost, kept no fowls. In these pursuits lie the nuclei that bid fair to tie nomadic hunters to fixed abodes.

342 Handuna's hut was a long low structure of wattle and bast thatched
[281 with straw, and partitioned into three or four dark rooms, occupied by
362] his family and those of his sons-in-law. At one end of the building was an open living-room in which we were entertained with deer skins for seats.
231 Slung from the eaves, at the other end of the hut, was a gourd, the mouth of which was plugged with wax pierced with two small holes, through which bees busily entered and emerged. As I focussed my camera on this interesting example of Vedda apiculture, the enterprising showman naively remarked that a gentleman had once given him a rupee for that picture; but he might have spared the hint for the good it brought him.

343 Standing a little apart from the main hut, was a squat, kennel-like
[84] structure for the segregation of women, during their monthly indis-
[171] position. This feature is universal among jungle folk, whether Vedda, half-Vedda, Sinhalese, or Tamil. These sheds, barely sufficient for an individual to sit or lie crouched in, are often overgrown by jungle, and only crudely protected with bark-slats or deer skins; they have a fire-place at the open entrance; sometimes they are more hygienically built over trestles. Considering the poor protection they afford, and their nearness to the forest around, it must require some fortitude on the part of those occupying them, especially at night.

● 252 We now saw the monkey we had brought prepared for food. A slow fire was kindled in the garden; on this the carcase was placed, and turned over until well singed, emitting a most appetising odour. The smooth stone on which Handuna had up to now been seated, and which did service as seat or platter as occasion demanded, was requisitioned; the half-roasted animal was placed on it, disemboweled, and quartered with the blade of an arrow. A dog, that had been awaiting the opportunity, feasted on the offal in full view. The head was severed and split in half,
[824 the limbs, dismembered, and the trunk broken flat. The various frag-
264] ments were then put back to roast. When all was ready, dainty morsels were served out to us on broad *kenda** leaves (the usual plates of these people), with the polite request that we must eat first. A fragment of
262 liver done to a turn, and a dainty hand with the charred little fingers

*Macaranga tomentosa.

and ear-rings and necklaces. Sober, wistful children ate raw melons or fragments of *kurrukkan* cake as hard as brick, plastered over with flies.

Indian corn and *kurrukkan*, the staple food of these people, are prepared in a variety of ways. After soaking in water for twenty-four hours, they are reduced to flour, *kurrukkan* on grind-stones, maize with pestle and mortar, and eaten in one of three forms—*talapa*, *roti*, or *pittu* appetised with pungent sambols.

Let us look into one of their homes. It is windowless and dark, except for the light that comes between the bark-slats in a hundred dazzling shafts. There are two rooms; the inner small and narrow, the outer a larger living room with a single doorway protected by a two foot fence—a provision for the children. At one corner is a hearth underlying a low trestle bridging the wall angle, for drying flesh; at another a cage-work containing earthen pots and garish Allervale cups and plates. Hanging about the walls are rolled mats, oil bottles, baskets and clusters of sheathed corn cobs. Head-high is an open ceiling containing a jumble of things such as an old umbrella, wicker baskets, large earthen pots and gourds. On the floor is a large grind-stone, and littered about are shreds of mats, a deer skin or two, dirty cloths, a small pillow, a betel bag, a rush broom and a polished plank—certainly the most primitive chair imaginable. There is also a coconut-scraper of curious design, made of a serrated iron disc wedged into the outstanding limb of a triple-branched stem resting on its Y-shaped arms. Such are the appointments of a *dewa* Vedda's domicile.

These communal dwellings stockaded against beast aggression in the heart of wild nature, the watch huts on the trees, the halkes all night, proclaim the incessant struggle between man and the animals in whose strong kingdom he is only a small unit. But for its inalienable hardships the life of this people makes a homely appeal to the human heart. Nature a capricious giver, bestows now abundantly now sparingly, and he who would wrest a living from her must have supple thews and great endurance.

Henanagalla was a place of antiquarian interest a few miles from Dolagalwella. On the summit of a large low rock in an undulating glade stood a broken dagaba completely obscured by a growth of big trees and scrub. Desultory worshippers had trussed up a slab for offerings of wild flowers. A low wall of hewn granite blocks surrounded the structure, and a half buried monolith or two peeped out of the ruin.

Descending from here and working round through a tangle of brush-wood, we came to a commodious cave quite forty paces long, showing the remains of enclosing and partitioning walls, a slotted stone for the support of a pillar and a large flat *puja* stone.

Besides these evidences of ancient occupation, were signs of more recent use. The cave was obviously a resort of monitor hunters. There were the long sticks with which the savoury creatures had been poked out of deep lairs, and cooking frames where they had been roasted. The floor was littered with their dry heads, corn-cobs and nut-shells.

But more interesting than all this were the crude drawings that adorned the inner dome. Here was a veritable gallery of untutored art, wrought with finger for brush and a mixture of ash and water for paint. There were the most primitive representations imaginable of leopards, elephants

S: Spinal D-S (ca. 1920) 1945 AXS Vedda AXS
Gypsies 215
Ceylon

with muscular grace, performed the flower dance to the Peradeniya god for the favour of crops.

The women of Kadiniyaya slunk into their hovels at sight of us. A man sat scraping the hair off a girl's scalp with a blunt knife; another was muttering a spell over some lime juice for a fevered wretch. Swarming blue-bottles and a most unholy odour led to the discovery, in a covered hole, of putrid sambur entrails awaiting the pot; like civilised epicures they apparently fancied their game high!

Wadinagala, the southern Friar's Hood (the mountain that rose to Buddha's bidding), towered before us as we lay encamped in the picturesque little village of Landegama. Here we learnt that a company of gipsies, some fifty strong, had preceded us. These forest gargs, unlike those of the road, are nomadic shepherds, pasturing their herds in the jungle plains. They hunt the sambur with dogs and javelin. Approaching coastal towns from time to time they barter their cattle, and are on the whole fairly prosperous. But a gipsy is a gipsy the world over, faithful to traditions of snake-craft and beggary, and these are no exception, plying their trade among the poor villagers with an eye to a handful of grain or vegetables. Sooner or later we hoped to meet them, but for the present all the evidence we had of them were abandoned hearths and a helpless pup they had heartlessly abandoned.

At Landegama was a hunter who entertained us far into the night with jungle tales. He described to us how leopards caught monkeys. The animal climbs a tree in the line of feeding langurs, and waits concealed. When one of them comes near enough he springs on it and both fall to the ground. Should the attempt fail, the leopard gives forth a series of fearful growls and rushes hither and thither making great commotion; then suddenly becomes quiet and hides. Inquisitiveness is the monkeys' undoing; at first, uttering their cries of rage and terror, the 'ah-he-hik' so familiar to hunters, they look for him from secure heights; but not seeing him they become bolder and bolder and come down lower and lower; until eventually, one pays the price of his foolhardiness.

Wadinagala village, singularly enough, lies farther from the rock of that name than Landegama which nestles at its foot. Here was a medley of huts well illustrating the various types prevalent in the *Vanni*. The roofs of all were *illuk*-thatched; but the walls were various: a few were made of mud, some of wattle and bast, others of wattle and maize sheaths or of leafy twigs; while most had two or more of these combined.

A sudden shower, that caught us as we rested on the banks of the Palang Oya, proved the harbinger of many wet days to come. That evening we entered Kokunahare in the pelting rain, our clothes, bedding and food deplorably drenched. Rushing into the first hut we found we ousted its occupants with gentle persuasion. Cooking was out of the question; but our ever-ready lunch basket provided a menu of tongue, fruit salad, biscuits and cheese, and a thermos-flaskful of hot tea. What shifts the shivering carriers made for food or sleep we had not the courage to inquire.

3. A VEDDA OF DIVULANA

DIVULANA was recompense for our toil. The irrigation bungalow, placed high above the bund, over-looked the beautiful hill-encircled tank, whose glassy surface was broken by stones and snags on which cormorants and darters sunned.

Two miles within the forest lived Naga-Kauwa, a witless dwarf of fifty, the sole Vedda of Divulana. Born in Kovil Vannami, he came as a child to the Rasagala caves, of which in their best day his people occupied four or five. Now he and his family alone survived. Three years ago he had abandoned cave life for that of the *chena*; and there we found him amidst his cassava and the tender teak he nursed for a consideration from Government.

His stalwart sons—quite unlike the father—brought us some yams, a mouse deer and a primitive drum—the broken-off rim of an earthen pot covered with wanderoo skin and fitted with a taut fibre.

Kauwa's hut was a thing to behold. The Tamils had said, "See Kauwa, this is the way to build a house"; and Kauwa had built this crazy thing a child of twelve might have bettered. The thatch was a medley of dry grass and bark; the walls were of wattle, which stuck out untrimmed through the roof, and bark slats so poorly fitted together that there was more aperture than cover. The structure was no more than four-foot square and two-storied at that; merely a covered trestle three feet off the ground. In the lower floor his wife and children lay huddled like rats; on the upper, its irregularities smoothed with bundles of rush (primary elements of a mat), the lord and master slept. Such was the caveman's first attempt at fashioning an abode. By the entrance was a fireplace, and, scattered about, were the bones of monkeys and monitor lizards and the carapaces of tortoises that had served for food. Stuck in the roof was a broken comb of buffalo horn, true touch of civilisation, for the test of a real Vedda is that his hair must be stranger to a comb.

Getting information from Kauwa was like squeezing water out of a stone; he could no more describe the simplest thing than he could fly. Still, patience does much and this is what we gleaned:

Tortoises and pangolins are considered good eating by the Veddas; but the porcupine they abhor, calling it a *rodiya* among beasts, and only killing it to give to their dogs. Why Veddas never eat porcupine I have not been able to ascertain: it is said that, in the old lawless days, they would go the length of burning down a Sinhalese hut in which they discovered a porcupine being cooked. Pork they love because it clears the blood, and one or two pigs a month the Vedda must have. Venison causes itching and is not so good!

Vedda cookery, simple in the extreme, can still boast some tasty dishes: *Gona-puruwa* is a sausage consisting of alternate layers of sambur meat and fat. *Le-puruwa* is the same, with the addition of a third layer of blood-clot. *Gon-thel-puruwa* is made by skinning the monitor's meaty

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1945 AX5 Vedda AX5

tail through a dorsal slit, partially separating the muscle mass from the caudal vertebrae, and introducing into the space thus formed strips of fat from the animal's flank; the skin is then sewn over with bast strip and thorn, and the stuffed tail is roasted on embers and eaten forthwith, or smoked and put by for future use. 252 262 251

Young hornbills being full of fat are a special Vedda delicacy; nor is the helpless imprisoned mother spared. Even more cruel is the treatment by these merciless epicures of the young of the edible-nest swiftlet. I asked Kauwa what he did with these when out nesting. "Eat them," he said; "the eggs are small but tasty; and so are the young which cry 'ki-ki-ki' as we put them in the fire." 262

The Vedda custom of preserving venison in honey is well known. This is how it is done: Into a hollow in a rock a little honey is poured; to this is added a few pieces of venison cut up small (pork is unsuitable as the fat prevents permeation); more honey is then poured on, and more meat added; and so layer by layer, till honey and meat are well intermingled. A protecting slab is then placed over the mouth of the hole. 251

Boa fat is said to be good for fractures; the broken limb being wrapped in *riti* bark or cloth saturated with the heated oil. They say it takes a month and a half for a fracture to heal; and in this, show more good sense than certain credulous Sinhalese who assure one that their *vedaralas* can cure a fracture in the time it takes a pot of rice to boil! 752

Kauwa had many charms against wild beasts. The one for buffaloes made them bleed from mouth and nose and fall dead! If you saw a bear you should *think* the appropriate charm and tie a knot in your hair; only if the animal attacked should you shout the words. For the leopard, he had no charm: "Cha, what's the use of that," he said; "the animal is more frightened of us than we of him." 777

Of Vedda heroes, there was Yapal whose voice could be heard a hundred miles; and Balagala-seya whose arm was like a tree, who carried a bow the girth of a man's thigh, and whose arrow would go through anything; in yonder Balagala rock he lived. 773

Their dead they cover with leaves and abandon where they die, or deposit in shallow graves covered over with earth and thorns to keep the pigs away. 764

Kauwa never bathed; he confirmed the assertion by rubbing rolls of dirt off his abdomen. "Does your wife not complain," we asked. "If she did," was the characteristic reply, "I would strike her with my axe-head, and ask her why she did not think of that when she came to me." 515

Vedda nuptials are not burdened with ritual: A prospective husband, having gained the consent of the girl's parents, returns a few days later, it may be with a friend, and perhaps a monitor or two. Placing his bow and arrows on the roof of the hut, he enters. All partake of the feast of lizards and yams; the girl, seated next to her man, doles out his food, not partaking of a morsel until he has fed, and she has given him a chew of betel and water to wash his hands. The man usually throws in his lot with his father-in-law, but sometimes he takes the girl away, leaving a couple of arrows behind in exchange. The girl's parents may accompany them some distance saying by way of adieu, "Take our child and keep her well." In custom we may differ from these wild and simple folk, but in affection and solicitude are one. 583 585 591

descend; while two or three others, with perhaps a dog, beat the jungle above and start the animal, which is shot almost at the point of the guns.

There is no flesh the Vedda loves more than that of the wanderoo (grey langur). He will sometimes be seen to halt by a tree, and strike its trunk three resounding blows with his axe-head. This is to discover the whereabouts of the wanderoo. On hearing the sound, these animals, imagining it to be that of a falling tree or rock, give vent to the "a-he-hik" so characteristic of them when startled.

One afternoon Suthu Banda brought in a great langur slung on his shoulder, with its tail rove through its slit cheek. Within twenty-five minutes not a morsel of the animal remained. Disjointing the tail at the root, he dissected up a strip of dorsal skin in continuation of it as far as the neck; twisting this over a branch, he suspended and rapidly skinned the quarry. The meat was cut up in pieces and placed on large logs over a fire, the flames licking them all round. Bony segments, such as the spine, ribs and limbs, were pounded on a stone when half burnt, and then replaced on embers. The stomach and entrails were slit open and their contents merely scooped away with the fingers, and roasted. No water whatever was used! It was a truly sickening sight to see the relish with which the intestines with adherent faecal matter were greedily eaten. When we remarked on the repulsiveness of it, the gluttonous epicure calmly remarked, "Yes, the filth gets eaten right enough. What of it? It is good medicine. If you get a wanderoo what haven't you got? No marriage is like it." How true is the saying that the pig and the Vedda are one!

Fish* abound in the forest streams, all bony and very indifferent to the taste. The Veddas catch these, not with rods or nets, but with poisons. The fruit, bark or root of certain trees† is smashed up and thrown into pools or banked waterways. The water is then stirred; as it gets stained the fish become restless, and leap on to the bank, or turn belly upwards stupefied. They are collected and boiled with a little salt and a few chillies and eaten at once, or dried over a trestle like meat.

Let us see what sort of fare the jungle trees provide. Of fruit there is plenty in season:—*Mora*, *kong*, *galseembela*, *veera*, *palu*, *damba*, jak, guavas, *ulkantha*, *hibutoo*, *bulanga*, *kothalanga*, *leyaneya*, *karambe*, *madu* never eaten raw because it causes giddiness and vomiting!). The cabbages of palms such as *inthibuda* and *kitulalla*. Yams:—*Gonala*, *katuala*, *kirathala*, *alalla*, in order of preference. Then there are the various barks they chew incessantly to stay the hunger of their long fasts:—*Demata*, *bolvilla* and *thambola*, all substitutes for betel; and *davata* for arecanut; and besides these the barks of *opulu*, *galseembela*, *mora*, *habatha*, *nuga*, *kalawa*, *galkara*, and in fact anything, however, insipid, provided it is not poisonous.

Their medicines are few. There is *gonkuttudalu* which they crush up with water and apply to the head for headaches; *meelalla-pothu* which they smash up with *chunam* and use as a dressing for wounds; but for abrasions of the foot they will as soon rub in a little sand with

* *Walapotho*, *anguluo*, *lulo*, *katukanao*, *kanupatho*, *antho* (eels), *maguro*, *hungo*, *kehaliyo*, *pethy*, *walikondo*, *sethalu*, *badapathalo*, *walikairiyo*, *piniweliyo*, *kovalayo*, *galpandurno*.

† *Kuhurumang-gedde*, *kalu-mul*, *thimbiri-gedde*, *dhamba-pothu*, *pussal-mul*.

5. NESTS AND HIVES

This is the time to climb the steep;
Up through the shadowy woods to grope,
Over the stones where the lichens creep,
On to the crag that crowns the slope;
To the wild bees stronghold hushed in sleep.

J. STILL

NESTS

136 222 In dark fearsome caverns, and down the sides of dizzy ravines, the little edible-nest swiftlet builds its dainty nest fashioned of hardened saliva and moss. Those who think they know better will tell you that the all but invisible specks, sometimes seen high away in the empyrean at dusk, are flights of these birds on their way to the sea to gather salt foam with which to build.

222 [439] One of the favourite pursuits of the Veddas is the collecting of these nests for barter. They call the birds *kudukarayas* (nest-makers) and their nesting caves *kudu galges*. These caves are often deep gloomy recesses only entered with lighted candles (made by squeezing a column of bees-[373] wax round a central wick of cloth or bark) to scare away the scores of poisonous snakes (*karawalas* and *mapilas*) that gather there to eat the [417] eggs and young. Sometimes the nests stud the steep sides of narrow gorges, and are then taken by the aid of cane ladders let down from above.

The nesting-places are a secret the Veddas guard closely. When they took me on one of their expeditions it was on the condition that no bearers came. A hard climb brought us to near the summit of the tree-covered mountain side. "*Cho-ho-ho*," shouted the Veddas as a warning to possible bears. The approach to the cave was over-run with *aralu-wel* (used for bows) and *niyande* (of which waist strings are made). The cave itself, surmounted by an enormous rock the fall of which seemed imminent, was dark and stifling; and it was quite a time before one could discern the cup-shaped nests that clung in clusters to the vaulted roof. A Vedda handed me a parent bird he had trapped, a tiny-beaked, brownish thing, with sweeping wings, black feet and unswallow-like tail. It was quite a time too before one realised that there was a commotion in the air, and that little wraith-like forms were flitting in and out in sore distress "Swish, swish; wing, wing; twit, twit; kisiri, bisiri; takara, takara; kata, kata, kata," as from fairy castanets, came the barely audible sounds. Outside, these were louder, "Chara-chiris, chara-chiris; che-week, che-week, che-week," they twittered in futile resentment. But to these sounds the ruthless despoilers were deaf, as, mounted on heaps of stones, they scraped away with knife or arecanut cutter the trim nests from their tenacious attachments, leaving only those with eggs behind, lest the colony be killed outright. On a boulder near by [252] was a fire-place where the young had been roasted, as Kauwa of Divulana had described.

[p. 86]